

### 3.3 NIAGARA RIVER PARKS

#### (TOWPATH PARK, ONTARIO STREET BOAT LAUNCH, ISLE VIEW PARK)

##### DESCRIPTION

Over the past few years, the County of Erie has taken a leadership role in the preservation and enhancement of the environment along the Buffalo and Niagara Rivers. The Niagara River Corridor is a world-renowned wildlife corridor and the past couple decades has seen much improvement with regard to water quality and habitat restoration. The County has worked closely with the City of Buffalo, New York State and various Federal Agencies to acquire two small, but notable park sites along the Niagara River, including Towpath Park and Ontario Street Boat Launch.

A hidden gem lies at the foot of Hertel Avenue along the shoreline of the Niagara River, with excellent westerly views of the River and adjacent Rich Marina. Towpath Park is a small, 5-acre County-owned facility, which is appropriately named for the historic towpath, which once passed through this area following beside the Erie Canal. The small “pocket-park” is primarily passive in nature and is popular for fishing, picnicking and as a resting area along the Riverwalk system.

The Ontario Street Boat Launch is one of the smallest and most unique of all of the County Park holdings in Erie County. It is approximately 1-acre in size and is a hard-surfaced boat ramp facility with an adjacent parking area for boat trailers. A concession stand is located on the grounds and is operated seasonally. This site is also a popular place for fishing, picnicking (limited facilities) and watching sunsets over the Niagara River. This small facility is also an important park node along the linear Riverwalk system between Tonawanda and Buffalo.

Both the Towpath Park and Ontario Street Boat Launch sites were once in the corridor of the historic Erie Canal. Both sites were once City of Buffalo facilities and have more recently come under the control of Erie County.

##### EXISTING PARK FEATURES AND FACILITIES

###### *Towpath Park*

*Seating / Overlook area*  
*Open Play Lawn*  
*Parking lot*  
*Connections to Riverwalk*

###### *Ontario Street Boat launch*

*Concession / Restroom Structure*  
*Boat Launch*  
*Parking area (includes boats and trailers)*

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## LOCAL CONTEXT

Towpath Park site is easily accessed at the end of Hertel Avenue on the west side of the I-190 expressway on the Niagara River. The small park is bounded by the Niagara River to the west, a high-rise seniors housing development to the north, the I-190 and the Riverwalk to the east and the Rich Marina facilities to the south. To the east of the highway is the Niagara Street commercial strip and the Upper Westside neighborhood.

The Ontario Street Boat Launch is located on a narrow strip of land between the I-190 and the Niagara River. It is near the foot of Ontario Street where it intersects Niagara Street.

## RECREATIONAL CONTEXT

Other area recreational offerings include:

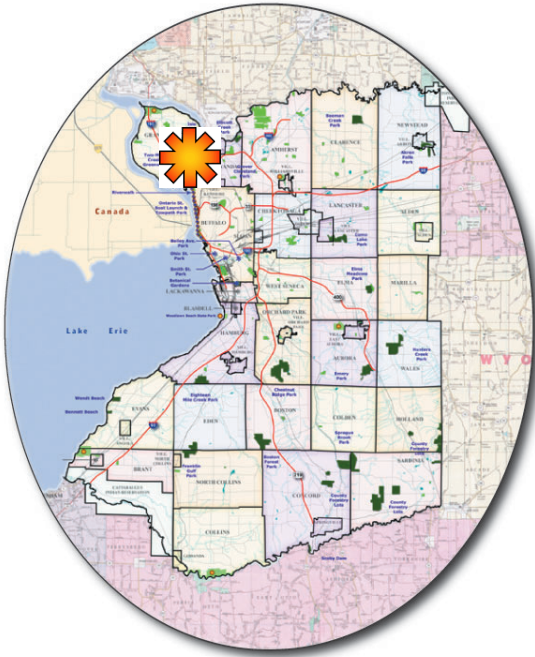
- Riverwalk  
Riverside Park

## CURRENT ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

- *All Niagara River park sites suffer from urban conditions and abuse*
- *Both Towpath and Ontario Street Boatlaunch sites are separated from the community by the NYS Thruway - I-190.*
- *There is little directional signage which highlight the locations of these facility to travelers along Niagara Street.*

## MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Provide additional fishing accommodations wherever possible. Add interpretive signage at both site, and at other key points along the Riverwalk, highlighting the many fishing “HOTSPOTS” along the Niagara River.*
- *Strengthen the connections between the Riverwalk and the two Niagara River Parks*
- *Provide better signage from Niagara Street to promote more public awareness of the two facilities.*



## ISLE VIEW PARK

### DESCRIPTION

Isle View Park is magnet for people on a warm summer evening. This 49-acre linear County-owned park in the Town of Tonawanda, is part of the Riverwalk recreational trail system and is heavily used by bikers, joggers, walkers, roller-bladers and many others. Isle View lies adjacent to Niawanda Park and the Two-mile Creek Greenway, forming an extensive linear park system along the banks fo the Niagara River.

### PARK AND AREA HISTORY

The park was acquired by the County in 1959, and is located on the site of the abandoned Erie Canal and Towpath.

### LOCAL CONTEXT

This popular linear park is located within the Town of Tonawanda, adjacent to the Niagara River. The Riverwalk travels through Isle View park in a north-south direction, linking to Niawanda Park at its northern end. This linear site is somewhat isolated from any major residential areas given that it is at the foot of a bluff overlooking the Niagara River, and is separated by River Road.

#### EXISTING PARK FEATURES AND FACILITIES

*Recreational trail system*  
*Concession Building*

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